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# **SHARED SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF PUBLIC SAFETY NETWORKS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Many new public sector collaborations exhibit the characteristics of Shared Service Organizations (SSO). Public Safety Networks (PSNs) are receiving more attention and priority in the United States as the country deals with ever increasing threats from terrorism and natural disasters. As a network of independent, collaborating, safety agencies, supported by an information and communications technology infrastructure, PSNs organize as SSOs to meet the needs of ensuring public safety. Analysis of two United States PSNs is used to characterize PSNs as SSOs. Results from this research should lead to improvements and efficiencies in cost, performance, and innovations in PSNs in line with improvements seen in other organizations adopting SSO structures. With federal calls for improved transparency and cross-agency data sharing and operations, classifying PSNs as SSOs aids in understanding the complexities of public safety operations. Results are potentially applicable to a broad range of cross-agency intergovernmental collaborative initiatives employing interorganizational systems.